*291 564 caste, is not supposed to wear his cloth below his knees. Now-a-days, when there is a general levelling up, the inferior races occupying a position they never held before, when people speak of caste as if it were a fanciful arrangement of the social fabric which it would be an excellent thing to destroy, forgetting that, fundamentally, it rests on racial differentiation, we see those of castes inferior to the Nâyar wearing their cloths to the ground—in the towns that is, where the sway of modern officialdom and education is felt. But, were a man of inferior caste to wear his cloth to the ground, away out in the district where the old order has not changed much, he would soon be made to repent having done what is believed to be an infringement of the privileges of the Nâyar. He would probably be well beaten, and might have his house burnt. The single cloth (mundu) constitutes the ordinary dress. No turban is worn. It is wrong for a [293] Nâyar to cover his head. But he may use an umbrella, and invariably does so when walking in the sun, for he is very susceptible to its rays. The cloth must be fastened at the waist in a certain way. Those of every caste tie or fasten their cloth round the loins in a certain way; people of no two castes tie the cloth alike.

Women.—A short cloth is worn somewhat tight round the loins, and over it is worn another cloth from the waist to below the knee. Nothing is worn above waist. When one sees women of the Nâyar caste on the roads (they are *never* to be seen in the towns), or at the festivals or other large gatherings, they are wearing a cloth loosely covering the upper portion of the body. In Malabar, where there is prevalent the idea that no respectable woman covers her breast, there has crept in lately, chiefly amongst those who have travelled, a feeling of shame in respect of this custom of dress. Dress is, of course, a conventional affair, and it will be matter for regret should false ideas of shame supplant those of natural dignity such as one sees expressed in the carriage and bearing of the well-bred Nâyar lady.

121 It will be most convenient to deal with the Nâyars as a body under such heads as marriage, customs, etc. Here we are concerned mainly with physical measures and general appearance, under which come dress and ornament. What has been said about dress may be taken as descriptive of all the clans. Before leaving the Kiriattil Nâyars it will be well to note the names of some of those actually measured.

*[291] [564] [115]

6:Fawcett G-5 (ca. 1900)1915
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Nayar

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NAYAR WOMEN (SOUTH MALABAR), AGED 20 AND 17.

[Facing P. 210]

*141 In four the nasal point was somewhat elevated.
*564 Slight prognathism with projecting teeth was observed in one individual, an unhealthy person.

Figure.—Seventy-one per cent. of the subjects were noted as "slight," 29 per cent. as "medium" and of those but two individuals are put down as "sturdily built."

*142 *Hair.*—In three individuals hairiness was conspi-
*564 cuously apparent, there being hair nearly all over the body, and in one of these the hair in the small of the back was so thick that in my notes it is described as "like a bush."

On the head.—In nearly 80 per cent. of the subjects the hair on the head was "plentiful and wavy"; in a few of these it was "very thick," while in the remaining 20 per cent. it was "moderate." In no case was it noted as "thin" or "slight." The number of subjects in which growth of hair on the cheeks was noted was one-fifth of the whole.

On the chest.—In nearly a quarter, the hair on the chest was noted as "thick."

On the arms.—In most cases it varied from "very slight" to "moderate." Rarely "thick."

On the legs.—In nearly half it was "moderately thick" to "thick"; in the remainder, slight to moderate.

Colour of the skin.—It should have been noticed before that the colour of the face of the ordinary Malayali is invariably lighter than that of the body; possibly from the prevailing custom of using the umbrella. Malabar is for the most part shaded by trees and palms, and its peoples have not that disregard for the sun's javelins which we see in the country to the eastward. No one
[293] starts on a journey, and rarely leaves his house, without
[177] his umbrella—the thing of cadjan now being by degrees replaced by the cheap umbrella of European manufacture. The labourer working in the field, the fisherman
292 in his boat on the sea, the boat-man on the backwater,
751 all wear a large umbrella-like hat. Women always carry an umbrella out of doors; or, as in North Malabar, an umbrella hat-like thing which seems to be a curious survival of the custom of wearing an umbrella hat, is carried. This is, apparently, an ordinary umbrella hat, but the central part, which appears to be made to fit the head, as in the ordinary umbrella hat, is too small by half to fit any head, and this hat-like umbrella is carried in the hand to shield the head from the sun and the face

indirectly, in the matter of giving or not giving new cloths to women after menstruation, but my information on the point is incomplete. Each receives from the temple daily during the festival a fixed quantity of rice, and their families are fed. Thus the tailor, the goldsmith, and the blacksmith, are under obligation to work as it may be required for the temple without remuneration in the ordinary way of labour, but for the honour only.

In the afternoon of the same day (the fifth) the Vannân and a Manûtan, the one following the other and not together, bring two umbrellas to the temple; Vannân bringing one of cloth, the other one of cadjan. I am not sure whether the cloth umbrella has been in possession of the Vannân, but think it has. At all events, when he now brings it to the temple it is in thorough repair, a condition for which he is responsible. The cadjan umbrella is a new one. Following these two as they walk solemnly, each with his umbrella, is a large crowd. There are the usual processions of Bhagavati on the elephant, encircling the temple thrice in the morning, at noon and at night. Nothing more is done on this day.

Early on the sixth day the headman of the Mukkuvans (fisherman), who by virtue of his headship is called the 'Arayân,' together with the blacksmith and the goldsmith comes to the temple followed by an interested crowd, but accompanied by no orchestra of drums. To the Arayân is given half a sack of rice for himself and his followers, a silver umbrella belonging to the temple is handed over to him to be used when he comes to the temple again in the evening. To the blacksmith is given the temple sword. The goldsmith receives the silver umbrella from the Arayân, and excutes on it any repairs that may be needful; and in like manner the blacksmith looks to the sword.

In the afternoon the headman of the Tiyans called the "Tandân," comes to the temple followed by two of his castemen carrying slung on a pole over their shoulders three bunches of young cocoanuts, an appropriate offering, the Tiyans being those whose ordinary profession is climbing the cocoanut palm, drawing the toddy, securing the cocoanuts, etc. This time there will be loud drumming and a large crowd with the Tandân, and in front of him are men dancing about, imitating sword play with sticks and shields, clanging the shields, pulling at bows as if firing off imaginary arrows, the while shouting and yelling *madly*. The sticks represent swords. Then come the blackmith and the goldsmith with the

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564 sword. The goldsmith has some responsibility connected
[326] with the sword, perhaps on account of its ornamentation, although the ordinary Malayali blacksmith is quite equal to the ordinary work of a goldsmith as well as repairing clocks and watches. Following comes the Arayân with the silver umbrella to an accompaniment of very noisy drumming; he and his umbrella in great state under a canopy of red cloth held lengthways by two men, one before, one behind. The procession of Bhagavati continues throughout the night, and ceases at day-break. These six days of the festival are called Vilakku.

796 A word about the drumming. The number of instru-
534 mentalists increases as the festival goes on, and on the last day I counted over fifty, all Nâyars. The instruments were the ordinary tom-tom, a skin stretched tight over one side of a circular wooden band, about 1½ feet in diameter and 2 or 3 inches in width, and the common long drum much narrower at the ends than in the middle, and there were (I think) a few of those narrow in the middle, something like an hour-glass cut short at both ends. They are beaten with drum-sticks, curved, not straight, thicker at the end held in the hand. The
[533] accuracy with which they were played on, never a wrong stroke, was truly amazing, although the rhythm was being changed perpetually; and their crescendo and diminuendo, from a perfect fury of wildness to the gentlest pianissimo, was equally astonishing, especially when we consider the fact that there was no visible leader of this strange orchestra.

Early on the seventh and last day, when the morning procession is over, there comes to the temple a man of the Pânan* caste. He carries a small cadjan umbrella which he has made himself, adorned all round the edges with a fringe of the young leaves of the cocoanut palm. His approach is heralded and noised just as in the case of the others on the previous day. The umbrella he brings should have a long handle and with this umbrella in his hand he performs a dance before the temple. The
[293] Malabar umbrella has a very long handle as a rule, in fact the correct way to carry an umbrella is with the end of the handle resting in the hand while the arm is straight at the side.

[346] The temple which is figured in the plate[1] is situated within a hollow square enclosure, which none in caste

* Pânan, a caste numerically small, and inferior. They make umbrellas of cadjan and perform at temples.

[1] [See Plate XII, facing P. 252, Category 116--Analyst]

9:Iyer E-4, 5 (ca. 1902-1906)1912
AWll Kerala AWll
Nayar

disengaged as quickly whenever he drops his 'musquet' in the wood or slings it across his shoulders for the purpose of rushing to close encounter with this terrible instrument."[1]

Cavalry was unknown; there was only infantry. The soldiers wore a silk cloth wound round the head and carried swords, shields, lances and bows. The king had an umbrella formed of the leaves of a tree and fixed on to the end of a cane, for protection from the sun. There was no standard. When they were in battle, and one army was at a distance from the other, two ranges of a cross-bow, the king would ask the Brahmans to go to the camp of the enemy and tell the knights to let one hundred of his men fight with the same number on his side, when both the parties would go to the central space to do so. The fighting continued even for three days, when blows were given on the head and at the legs. After the death of some men on either side, the survivors were directed to return to their camps. If any more fighting was desired, the same course was adopted. Sometimes the king rode on an elephant, and sometimes the Nayars carried him. The pay of a soldier was four carlini a month, and in time of war half a ducat.

The Nayars whom the king received in his service were never dismissed, however old they might be. They received their pay and rations, and the king granted favours to whosoever had served him well. If, however, they were left unpaid for some years, some four or five hundred of the aggrieved would rise up and go in a body to the palace, and send word to the king that they would go away dismissed, because he did not give them food. The king would then beg them to have patience, pay them at once either the whole amount due to them or a part of it with a promise to pay the balance at an early date. The king generally satisfied them, considering it a disgrace that they should go away to serve under another ruler. Even in times of war they were not at liberty to touch any peasant, or eat and drink with him in his house without penalty. The king was bound to support the mother and family of any soldier who died in war. He also treated, at his own expense, any soldier who was wounded in battle.[2]

1. Abbe Dubois People of India.
2. A Description of the Coasts of East Africa and Malabar, page 130-131, Duarte Barbosa.

9:Iyer E-4, 5 (ca. 1902-1906) 1912
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the caste or the grown-up women cook and serve the food to 556
the inmates who sit in the dining hall with their own dishes or with plantain leaves placed before them. In ordinary and poor families the cooking and serving are done by women alone.

In grand festivities in which food is served to a large 574
number of the caste-men, the preparations are similar to those 564
served at Brahman feasts, a full account of which will be given 252
when I deal with them.

The Nayars rank below the Ambalavásis and above the 564
Social status. polluting castes. Even among themselves there are various grades of social precedence, and the members of higher sub-castes do not freely mingle with those of the lower. Men of the higher sub-castes may some- [264]
times eat with those of the lower, but their women never take their meals with those lower to them in the social scale. It is [574]
curious to note that in grand feasts and on ceremonial occa- [796]
sions, good many formalities have to be observed in the [576]
allocation of seats in the dining hall for guests according to their social status, and any violation of the caste rules or etiquette will end in their abruptly leaving the hall. The touch of the Nayar pollutes the Brahmans, and they themselves in turn are polluted by the touch of the low caste Sudras. The [262]
consumption of meat does not entail loss of caste, though many abstain from eating it. They may take or drink water [271]
from the wells belonging either to their own caste or the three castes above them. Elayathús are their priests, but sometimes [793]
their caste-men also officiate as such, and Nambuthiris give [783]
punnydham (holy water) to the Nayars under pollution. Being in close contact with the Brahmans, they learn to conduct themselves as the Brahmans do, and their morning and evening baths and their worship in temples are as punctual as those of the priestly class.

Clothing is of considerable hygienic importance in the life 291
Dress. of a nation, and hygiene plays a considerable part in the dress of a Nayar. A piece of cloth, two to two-and-a-half yards long and one-and-a-half yards broad, is worn round the loins. It must touch the ground or very nearly so, and this method of wearing the cloth gives a simplicity and dignity most suitable to their classic features. A small upper garment is also worn while at home A Nayar [293]
always carries an umbrella while walking in the sun, but there is no covering for the head.

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949)1963 AWII Kerala AWII
Manans
Panans

first moved to Mangode village, where Kali came from, for eleven years. Today they were living at Managhat, where Erechen had found it easier to get work.

As Kunji, my aged informant, was getting tired, we now took on Krishnan, son of the late Krishnan by his second wife, Kunji (the repetition of the same names in a family in Kerala is very confusing). He helped us to check all this material and to correct some inaccuracies which had crept in. I noticed that in some cases it was impossible to obtain the name of the *tarawad*, and that the name of the village would be given instead. There were, however, no *kalarikels* with the Manans, I was told. The patrilineal clans were exogamous, as were also the matrilineal *kiriyams* of these people, although they were not very well known and practically neglected in present-day marriages. Inheritance was *makkathayam*, as expected, but I could get no confirmation of the reported four endogamous subdivisions described in the *Gazeteer of the Malabar and Anjengo Districts*, p. 130 (see Bibliography).

This Manan family was living on ground belonging to a Nambudri Brahmin *janmi* called Mangala Mana C.M.C. Narayana Nambudripad, but they did not pay him any rent. They were there more as his employees and, in exchange for dwelling space, rendered him the invaluable services which he needed from them as washermen and barbers.

In the afternoon of the same day of the 25th of November, 1949, upon which I had visited a Thandan household (see above, p. 189), I went to Palappuram to see the family of a *Panan* (exorcist and leaf umbrella maker).

They lived in a poor but neat and cleanly house, situated in a rather thickly overgrown grove of the usual Kerala vegetation. On the verandah of the modest building of dried cow-dung and mud, a bare breasted woman, Sita, aged forty five, and three boys awaited us. She received us nicely and spoke quite readily. She seemed resigned to her poverty and conditions and only complained to us that she was not able to give the boys more and proper food.

She told us that she lived with the surviving husband of a once polyandrous union, in which she had been married when she was eighteen to two brothers, Panju, who had died two years after the wedding, at twenty one, and Korappan, her present forty four year old husband. She had had a daughter, Kunji, within the first year of her marriage, and four boys afterwards with Korappan. All the children, including the twenty six year old eldest girl, were unmarried; she was still breast-feeding the youngest, two and a half year old Kumaran. This, as I

13;Thurston & Rangachari E-4, 5 (no date) 1909
AW11 Kerala AW11
Nayar

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NĀYAR FEMALES.

[facing P. 312]

13:Thurston & Rangachari E-4, 5 (no date) 1909
AW11 Kerala AW11
Nayar

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[533] The accuracy with which they were played on, never a wrong note although the rhythm was changed perpetually, was truly amazing. And the crescendo and diminuendo, from a perfect fury of wildness to the gentlest pianissimo, was equally astonishing, especially when we consider the fact that there was no visible leader of this strange orchestra. Early on the seventh and last day, when the morning procession is over, there comes to the temple a man of the Pānan caste (umbrella-makers and devil-dancers). He carries a small cadjan umbrella which he has made himself, adorned all round the edges with a fringe of the young leaves of the cocoanut palm. His approach is heralded and noised just as in the case of the others on the previous day. The umbrella should have a long handle, and, with it in his hand, he performs a dance before the temple. The temple is situated within a hollow square enclosure, which none in caste below the Nāyar is permitted to enter. To the north, south, east, and west, there is a level entrance into the hollow square, and beyond this entrance no man of inferior caste may go. The Pānan receives about 10 lbs. of raw rice for his performance. In the afternoon, a small crowd of Vettuvars come to the temple, carrying with them swords, and about ten small baskets made of cocoanut palm leaves, containing salt. These baskets are carried slung on a pole. The use of salt here is obscure.* I remember a case of a Nāyar's house having been plundered, the idol knocked down, and salt put in the place where it should have stood. The act was looked on as most insulting. The Vettuvans dance and shout in much excitement, cutting their heads with their own swords in their frenzy. Some

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* The Vettuvans were once salt-makers.

13:Thurston & Rangachari E-4, 5 (no date) 1909
AW11 Kerala AW11
Nayar

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796 lest their extreme sanctity might increase the powers
778 of the goddess to a dangerous extent. Poojahs are
[793] daily offered to her. An annual festival known as the
[782] Bharani, connected with this goddess, plays a most important part in the religious history of Malabar. It comes off in the Malayalam month of Meenam (about
788 March or April). Pilgrimages undertaken to the temple
796 on this occasion are potent enough to safeguard the pilgrims, and their friends and relations, from the perilous attacks of cholera and small-pox. Hence people resort thither annually by thousands from almost all parts of Malabar; and, the more north you go, the stronger will you find the hold which the goddess has
[782] upon the popular imagination. The chief propitiatory offering on the occasion is the sacrifice of cocks. In fact, every family makes a point of undertaking this sacred mission. People arrange to start on it at an auspicious moment, on a fixed day in small isolated bodies. Preparations are made for the journey. Rice, salt, chillies, curry-stuffs, betel leaves and nuts, a little turmeric powder and pepper, and, above all, a number of cocks form an almost complete paraphernalia of the pilgrimage. These are all gathered and preserved in separate bundles inside a large
[293] bag. When the appointed hour comes, they throw this
[481] bag on their shoulders, conceal their money in their girdles, and, with a native-fashioned umbrella in the one hand and a walking-stick in the other, they start, each from his own house, to meet the brother pilgrims at the rendezvous. Here a foreman is selected practically
[533] by common consent. Then commences the vociferous recitation of that series of obscene songs and ballads, which characterises the pilgrimage all along. The foreman it is that opens the ball. He is caught up by others

31: Slater S-5 (1916-1917) 1918 AWI India
Kerala AWII

323 would be better paid. Some of these potters are employed by tile works producing pottery and glazed earthenware and are there paid Rs. 10 or so a month.

322 *Carpenters.*—There are five families of carpenters. There is steady demand for their labour, which is well paid. The occupation is hereditary and confined to the caste of 'Asaris', as they are called, a division of the Thiyyas. Full time is spent on the craft, which follows very old traditions. Earnings average about 6 annas a day. The carpenters go out to other villages for work.

326 *Goldsmiths, blacksmiths.*—Two or three families of each combine their traditionary crafts with agriculture, and are better off than most other low caste families. In the agricultural seasons they work morning and evening in the fields; and only at noon at their crafts. So they earn wages in money and in kind. The goldsmith earns Rs. 8 to Rs. 10 in this way per month; the blacksmith Rs 5 to Rs. 10.

325 *Moulders.*—There is one family making vessels of bell-metal for all sorts of uses—domestic utensils, temple bells, etc. They are very skilled workers and well paid, owing to the great demand for their productions. Some cups, bowls, etc., made by these are very beautiful and exquisitely designed and polished. Earnings Rs. 10 to Rs. 15 per month, according to state of business.

285 *Basket-makers.*—Baskets, mats, etc., are made out of the bamboo by the Parials. Very useful, but cheap. Only a local market and mostly made to order, as most business is in the village. Only spare time is spent in this occupation; it is miserably ill paid owing to weakness in bargaining. There is scope for development.

293 *Umbrella makers.*—Umbrella making is the hereditary occupation of the Panans. The umbrellas are made of palm leaves and bamboo, and much used in the village. Until recently imported umbrellas were not seen. The indigenous article costs only a few coppers and gives better protection against rain, but is unwieldy. The earnings of the Panans from this source are very low, and they are now taking to agricultural labour.

[262] *The Chettis* make what are called *Pappatams*—the thin cakes to be fried in oil, for which Malabar is famous. The Chettis are also cartmen and take goods and passengers to neighbouring

[276] places. The *Paravans* make slaked lime for chewing. About half the adults chew a mixture of betel, areca, and slaked lime.

438 *Village trade.*—The village buys every year agricultural implements such as ploughs, spades, levelling boards, harrows, *kuzhi kutti*. Most of these are made to order by the village craftsmen. Some are bought at neighbouring fairs. Seed is usually preserved by the cultivator out of his produce, but sometimes he is forced by poverty to consume it and then borrows it or buys it with borrowed money. Live stock is bought at the weekly fair of the neighbouring village of Vaniamkulam.

The villagers buy the articles of ordinary consumption like salt, sugar, kerosene oil, gingelly and coconut oil, as well as the various grains and pulses at the village shop. Sugar is a luxury to all but the richest villagers. More than Rs. 600 worth of toddy is sold in the village, the Cherumas, Pariahs and Panans being the chief consumers. They pay in paddy, out of their wages. Clothing is bought at neighbouring fairs or in the nearest trading centre.